Crying: The Mystery Of Tears

William H Frey; Muriel Langseth

There are at least two books that should have received more notice than they do: biochemist William H. Frey's *Crying: The Mystery of Tears* (1985), a book based on his research about adult crying behavior, is mentioned only in passing; and psychotherapist Jeffrey A. Kottler's *The Language of Tears* (1996), a study of crying that includes theoretical as well as descriptive material, is ridiculed as inspirational "pop" psychology. Though the material is indeed fascinating (Do elephants really cry? Are tears always a sign of sincerity?), Lutz's structure of a series of anecdotes loosely tied together leaves the reader wanting more—whether this "more" be synthesis, interpretation, or just an authorial point of view. Lutz seems wary throughout in offering interpretations of his data. "Tears, idle tears," usually the stuff of poetry, become the stuff of scientific investigation for biochemist Frey, who asks here: Why do humans cry? Is crying healthy? Is there a chemical difference between tears of pain and tears of emotion? Do animals weep? Convinced that tears "hold the key to the chemistry of human emotions," Frey has conducted a variety of behavioral, psychological, genetic and chemical tests on tears. Based on his research, he concludes that crying does indeed relieve stress. If you are interested in the history of tears AND the chemistry of human emotive weeping then this is a must read. You will find this book widely quoted, and it is good to support the author by purchasing this marvelous work. Read more.
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